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Title: Declaring Madurai Airport in Tamil Nadu as International Cargo Airport to boost export from the State.

SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN (DINDIGUL): Thousands of persons undertake air travel from southern districts of Tamil Nadu for various purposes viz. business, tourism and other purposes to several foreign countries especially Malaysia, Singapore, Dubai, Sharjah, Muscut and Kuwait and return from there. Madurai with a number of super speciality hospitals is also a health destination visited by foreign nationals for treatment. Direct flight from Madurai to those destinations will substantially reduce their cost of travel and its duration. Lack of direct international connectivity except in the case of Sri Lanka and delay in notifying Madurai Airport as International Cargo Airport severely hamper industrial investment and development in the region. International connectivity to Madurai, which is the cultural capital of our state and gateway to southern districts is an important place from infrastructure point of view for initiating industrial ventures.

If Madurai Airport is included in the Bilateral Airport Treaties, International air liners especially from the Middle East and South Asian countries would introduce direct flights to Madurai.

Direct export of textiles to Dubai/Europe/US, Handloom towels to US and other countries, fresh vegetables and fruits from main market Oddanchatram near Madurai, Flowers and sizeable quantity of engineering goods, automobile spare parts, granite icons, medical equipment, Value added food products and other commodities are exported from the southern districts of Tamil Nadu on daily basis to many international destinations now through Thiruvananthapuram, Calicut, Cochin, Trichy and Chennai Airports.

Direct export of such commodities through Madurai Airport will substantially reduce their transportation cost and time and increase the quantum of exports especially in the export of fresh fruits and vegetables and flowers from this region on account of their quick transportation to various international destinations.

I urge upon the Hon'ble Ministers of Finance and Civil Aviation to look into the matter for the expeditious execution of said works.